Shoreline buffers solve many problems for home owners:

- Emergent vegetation, like bulrushes and cattails, reduces shoreline erosion caused by boat traffic.
- Natural vegetation serves as a filter strip that helps prevent lawn fertilizer and pesticide runoff from reaching the lake.
- Unmowed wildflowers, grasses, and sedges along the shore create a biological barrier that will deter Canada geese from loitering on the lawn.
- Aquatic vegetation helps purify lake water by removing contaminants and by calming water, which allows suspended soil particles to settle to the lake bottom.
- Buffer zones reduce the acreage of lawn and the amount of time needed for mowing and lawn maintenance.

Fish Lake-Maple Grove, MN.
Courtesy of Gregg Thompson, AMSWCD.

Technical assistance is available from the Douglas SWCD.

L to R: White Water Lily, Marsh Milkweed, Marsh Marigold

Sources:

Gregg Thompson, Landscape Rehabilitation Specialist
Association of Metro Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Other References:

Lakescaping for Wildlife and Water Quality

Nongame Wildlife Program – Section of Wildlife

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

1999 By: Henderson, Dindorf, and Rozumalski

ISBN 0-9647451-2-7

Restore Your Shore

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

CD ROM 2002

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Lakescapes

Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District

www.DouglasSWCD.com

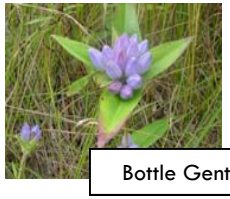
What is Lakescaping?

Lakescaping is the opportunity to restore and preserve natural shorelines for today and future generations. Transforming your lawn into a garden of wildflowers and native grasses improves water quality by filtering runoff, preventing erosion, providing needed natural habitat, and by eliminating the need for mowing and fertilization.

Consider making your shoreline into something more than another lawn.

Before and After. Lakescaping on Lake Le Homme Dieu

The **best** projects are not overly large or expensive, they are the ones that evaluate the site well, use existing features, keep up with maintenance, and examine the whole area, from the land out into the water.



Bottle Gentian

Getting Started

Lakeshore restoration begins with evaluating what you want out of your shoreline. Determine what uses are important and necessary to properly enjoy your shoreline by asking if you like sitting by the water, watching sunsets, or really only want a walking path to your dock.

Once you decide what you need for your uses, evaluation of your site's physical conditions can begin. Examine sun and moisture conditions and determine the size of your planting area.

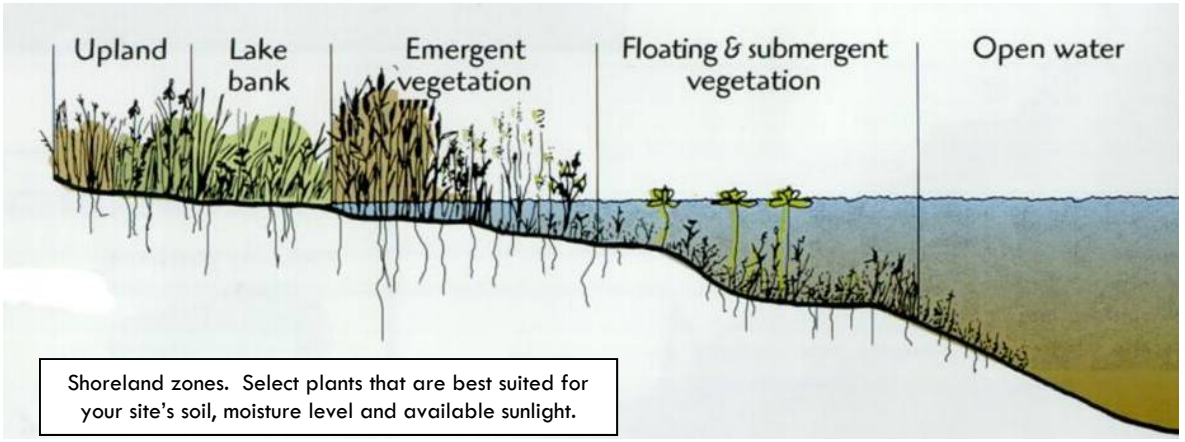
What to Plant?

Wildflowers, grasses, sedges, shrubs, and trees are available in many sizes, shapes and colors. Select the plants that are most appropriate for your area using the DNR's Landscaping for Wildlife and Water Quality book or Restore Your Shore CD ROM. Additional technical assistance is also available from greenhouses and agencies. Select some grasses to help support the wildflowers and take into consideration desired heights and colors. Once the plant list is put together, you are ready to order and begin the next part of the process.

You will need to prepare your site for the new plantings. Here, it is important to determine potential problems and obstacles. Invasive plants, such as reed canary grass, are sometimes difficult to control. Keep in mind what your site looks like throughout the year. Consider frequent ice heaves, spring flooding, or springs. Wave action may best be corrected by planting aquatic vegetation. Contact the DNR for more information and a permit with any in-lake work.

Maintenance

Even though lakescapes are low maintenance alternatives to traditional lawns, some maintenance is still needed to preserve your investment. Frequent watering immediately after planting is just as important as continued weeding after establishment. Be sure to keep a few of each plant type labeled so it will be easier to identify your plants from any invasive species that try to take advantage of your shoreline.



Shoreland zones. Select plants that are best suited for your site's soil, moisture level and available sunlight.